

Briefing Statement

Bureau: National Park Service
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Park: Valley Forge National Historical Park
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Valley Forge National Historical Park is a national icon of the American Revolution where visitors enjoy, understand, care for, and preserve America's history and natural heritage. The park provides an engaging, complete, educational and recreational experience, interpreting an important piece of the American story in a beautiful, historical, preserved landscape.

In FY 2008 (October 2007-September 2008), Valley Forge received \$250,000 in targeted **operational funds** to hire 20 seasonal employees and \$425,000 in **project funds** for three partnership projects. These funds are part of the NPS Centennial Initiative – a 10-year program to reinvigorate America's national parks and prepare them for a second century. The initiative includes a focus on increased funding for park operations plus a President's Challenge: up to \$100 million a year in federal funds to match \$100 million a year in philanthropic donations to the National Park Service.

An Operational Boost

The primary benefits of the additional operational funds were an increased ability to care for park grounds and structures and an increase in choices for visitors in public programming. Seasonal maintenance staff teamed with our career facility management staff to keep the park clean during heavy visitation, preserve historic buildings, and improve care of the landscape. Seasonal park rangers enabled us to increase the operating hours at Washington's Headquarters and Varnum's Quarters, offer more walking tours and living history programs and, for the first time, offer a ranger-led Junior Ranger program. Over the summer, the park signed up several hundred new Junior Rangers and offered natural history/resource programming for the first time ever on a daily basis.

Partnerships at Work

Valley Forge received \$475,000 in funding for three signature projects in the park. The projects at Valley Forge included investments in a multi-media show for the rehabilitated Washington's Headquarters area (\$200,000), completion of a new connector trail in the Washington's Headquarters area (\$100,000) and the expansion of the popular Once Upon A Nation storytelling program at the park (\$175,000). Private partners for these projects include the Friends of Valley Forge Park, the Encampment Store, and Once Upon A Nation.

By the Numbers

The Centennial Initiative funds enhanced park operations in the following ways:

- 60% more *Soldier Life* programs were provided at Muhlenberg Brigade
- The Once Upon a Nation Storytelling Benches saw an increase in visitation by 62% over 2007.
- Over 50 additional Junior Ranger Programs were provided in the park
- Over 1,500 Junior Ranger Activity Guides were distributed
- The 2008 Annual Condition Assessment was completed for every park structure
- An unsafe structure at Muhlenberg area was removed for visitor safety
- Over 25 hazardous trees were removed park-wide
- Over 200 tires were removed from the banks of Schuylkill along the River Trail
- Hazardous brick pavers on the walkway of the Welcome Center were repaired
- Woodwork and windows were repaired and repainted on three historic structures, helping us reduce our deferred maintenance
- Post and rail fencing was installed at intersection of Rt. 252 and Rt.23 to prevent further soil disturbance due to vehicle parking
- Renovation of a historic house along the Horseshoe Trail was completed
- Damaged exterior masonry was repaired on four historic structures

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